

City of Ottawa Media Availability, update on truck demonstration Friday, January 28, 2022

Moderator: Sebastien Tremblay, Media Relations

Participants on the call:

- Ottawa Police Service Chief Soly
- Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson
- Kim Ayotte, General Manager, Emergency and Protective Services
- Phil Landry, Director, Traffic Services

Questions from Media:

Agence France Presse: Will police will be partnering with Americans for security this weekend?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- As it started and will only take place in Canada, we are more focused on Canada partners
- However, it's always a part of our process to look internationally

Agence France Presse: Are you still expecting 10,000 people at the demonstration?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- We're still trying to get the most accurate information. We don't have that number, but rather a few hundred

Canadian Press: You've identified other groups mixed in among organizers. Can you identify which ones?

Chief Soly:

- I'm not at this point able to name any groups
- We have full cooperation from security agencies, including CSIS, RCMP
- We have national, local, international intelligence agencies working on this 24/7

Canadian Press: What do you plan to do if protesters stay for the weekend/week?

Chief Soly:

- Fluid part of our operation, we do not have their exit strategy
- We're in daily comms with organizers
- We will be concerned if there are still large demonstrations come Monday, as there is increased traffic flow, infrastructure operations to consider
- We are prepared and capable to remove vehicles
- So far, good cooperation from core organizers and will do our best to continue that throughout the demonstration

CBC Ottawa: At Canada 150, there were dump trucks sent to block access on the hill. Why hasn't that been done this time?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- There are a number of options to maintain safety and access to routes
- All options were weighed and determined we'd like to keep one lane open
- Will not be shutting down major arteries and will keep routes open to get emergency vehicles in and around downtown core as easily as possible

CBC Ottawa: Do protesters have a demonstration permit?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- To my knowledge, they do not

CityNews Ottawa: Can you elaborate on where you are directing the truckers and are there areas you don't want them to go?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- We have people coming in from all areas and traffic officers are managing
- We've been in communication with truck convoy captains to inform them of the best routes
- Will be routing some trucks from western route. Routes involve Pinecrest exit, Kent exit and will monitor traffic from Quebec side as well
- We are working with PPE. I understand they are able to gather on the hill and we will support PPE.

CityNews Ottawa: Mayor raised possibility of not being aware of portable washrooms. Has the City arranged for portable washrooms?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- We have been in contact with convoy captains
- They were a consideration around parliament

Kim Ayotte:

- We're assessing need and quantity
- Organizers may have organized portable washrooms and we're looking into it

CityNews National: In the event police need to clear the area, what signals will be given?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- We have voice magnifiers if needed. Police will be in the crowd and will engage
- Will give people warnings verbally through a variety of means to achieve that

CityNews National: How present is the insurrection guiding your preparations?

Chief Sloly:

- We have great faith in Canadians that they will enact their charter of rights but also the responsibility that comes with that freedom
- We believe protesters will do so peacefully and lawfully. There will be a response to any acts of violence

Global National: Other municipalities are sharing numbers. Can you share yours?

Chief Sloly:

- Until they arrive, we won't have an accurate count
- Other municipalities are providing an update of numbers as of that moment. The numbers change.
- Numbers reporter noted are reasonably accurate

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- 100-200 vehicles from New Brunswick
- Aware there may be large volume from Quebec side, 2000-ish people (pedestrians)

Global National: Can you speak to the core organizers – who are they?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- We have received good communications and cooperation from core organizers
- We have a good plan for a large convoy entering the downtown core
- Very fluid situation
- We are in communication with 8 separate convoy captains

CTV Ottawa: Do you recommend businesses close their doors this weekend?

Chief Sloly:

- Neighbourhood resource teams have been actively meeting with businesses, associations and residents and we're sharing information with them so they can make their own decisions
- We will make sure they are aware of the threats, most accurate up to date information, and will do our best to keep them safe

La Presse: What time are they expected to arrive?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- We've seen a group already and it's expected to begin tomorrow into Sunday
- It's possible groups will arrive today but it's unclear if they will wait until tomorrow

Le Presse: Are there risks for people outside amid the colder weather? Is there enough lodging?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- It will be the responsibility of the organizers.
- It is our priority, and we will keep everyone posted

Le Droit: What would make your job easier – businesses open or closed?

Chief Sloly:

- Least amount of traffic possible in the downtown core will help facilitate a safe environment
- Our priority is to provide most up-to-date information to businesses to make the most informed decisions
- Should the threat environment change, we will provide that information and will make direct recommendations at that time.

Ottawa Citizen: Is your main concern the potential for violence?

Chief Sloly:

- We have yet to receive a direct threat, however, we cannot ignore the rhetoric
- We are prepared with intelligence assets, partners to interdict where necessary
- We've been told a peaceful demonstration is expected but we are prepared to deal with any groups coming here to cause harm

Ottawa Citizen: Have staff received direction from leadership on personal participation in demonstrations?

Chief Sloly:

- My expectation as Chief is that every member will adhere to our policy
- When we have a large demonstration, we remind our officers of their oath of office, requirement of professional communication
- If there are breaches, there will be consequences

Kim Ayotte:

- We have a strict code of conduct and would expect everyone to act accordingly

- Any breach of that would be investigated

Radio-Canada: How many police officers will be on site?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- We can't provide the number of how many officers we will have, but you can expect many officers with various kinds of equipment
- It's possible to see officers on top of buildings, drones, etc.

Radio-Canada: Are you aware that protesters are going to officials addresses?

Chief Sloy:

- Planning started a week ago
- We have received briefings
- We have seen increasing threats towards elected officials in the past
- We will take necessary action to anyone who commits hate crimes

TVO: Do you advise people to stay home this weekend?

Acting Deputy Chief Trish Ferguson:

- We appreciate as little traffic as possible this weekend
- If they have necessary work, appts, they must expect large delays

Toronto Star: Which parallel groups are you referring to?

Chief Sloy:

- We're not in a position to name groups
- Intelligence is ongoing

Toronto Star: Is there a risk to elected officials? What is the threat assessment?

Chief Sloy:

- Lead role for protecting parliamentarians is with RCMP
- Statements that incite criminal behaviour will be charged and investigated
- Anything related to the security of public officials will be dealt with in a coordinated in an immediate manner